

TALKING POINTS  
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES SUSAN FALATKO  
RECEPTION ON BOARD USS NITZE  
TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2014 18:00  
PORT LOUIS, MAURITIUS

His Excellency, President Kailash Purryag, Her Excellency Vice President Monique Ohsan Bellepeau, The Honorable Arvin Boolell, His Excellency Former Vice President Raouf Bundhun, His Excellency Kailash Ruhee, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Commander John Bub, Commanding Officer, USS NITZE; Distinguished guests; Good evening.

It is a real pleasure to be aboard the USS Nitze tonight, and on behalf of the U.S. Embassy I thank you for hosting us this evening. Tonight's event is a celebration of the enduring partnership between the United States of America and the Republic of Mauritius not only in maritime security, but in numerous bilateral and multilateral efforts, and of course, in friendship.

Commander, your crew has had a busy week here. Your visit fortuitously coincided with the 46th anniversary of Mauritius' independence, and were able to take part in the spectacular National Day festivities last Wednesday. On Thursday over thirty volunteers from your crew spent the day at Ti Rayons Soleils, an NGO that works with marginal families, installing playground equipment, repairing fencing, assembling sports equipment, and installing concrete sidewalks for the children who live there.

On Friday around a dozen folks from your team were at the Shelter for Women and Children in Distress in Curepipe refurbishing chairs and desks in the classroom, cleaning the storeroom, and, I think most importantly, spending some meaningful time entertaining the kids who live there. But it hasn't all been work – we've been happy to see the fun – and competitive – side of your sportsmen, some of whom played basketball games with the Mauritius Police Force and the Mauritian Basketball Federation. The team from the Nitze made a good showing against the police, but leave here quite impressed I think with the skills of the players from the Mauritius Basketball Federation, who – sorry guys - trounced them quite soundly.

So, I commend you and your crew for using this visit not only for rest and relaxation – to get off the water and on to the beautiful beaches here, but as a chance to interact with the Mauritian community. Although the United States feels far from Mauritius in distance, your activities remind us that the world's oceans connect our two countries and make neighbors of us all.

You who navigate the oceans enable us to help friends in need and to face and surmount hostility far from our shoreline. Maintenance of security at sea is essential to mitigating threats like piracy, terrorism, weapons proliferation, and drug trafficking. Countering these transnational threats enhances global stability and secures freedom of navigation for the benefit of all nations.

Through our countries' joint efforts, piracy here in the Indian Ocean has been greatly reduced, but it remains a threat to commerce and to security with costs to the global economy still estimated in the billions of dollars.

I congratulate Mauritius for contributing its resources to international coordination of military operations and intelligence sharing, to strengthening judicial frameworks for arrest, prosecution and detention of pirates and to aiding in the disruption of illegal financial operations. Together we are building a safer and economically sound future for all our people.

Again, let me thank Commander Bub and the crew of the USS Nitze for their visit and their efforts to maintain and strengthen our countries' collaboration – on the security and community fronts.

I want to thank you all again for coming wish you a pleasant evening!